Role Model:
Nora Carr, an award-winning columnist for eSchool News said it best, “Educators need to recognize that they serve as role models for children and young people.” Most people, especially teachers, do not look at themselves as role models. They simply see themselves as regular people, living regular lives, who chose to teach education. However, K-12 students are typically in school 6 to 8 hours a day, which means they spend most of their time with teachers! Again, responsibility and representation play nicely with being a role model. Therefore, teachers have a bigger impact on students then what they think.

Reputation:
To quote Professor Hundert (played by actor Kevin Klein) in The Emperor’s Club, “How will history remember you?” If you never thought about or cared about your reputation before…now is the time to start! A reputation is defined as, “the estimation in which a person is held, especially by the community or the public generally.” Who you are, what you do, and everything you are about is all viewed as part of your reputation. For instance, someone who is known to drink a lot has a reputation as being a “drinker.” Someone who gets good grades is considered or has a reputation for being smart. Lastly, someone who constantly posts on Facebook has a reputation for being annoying! So, I ask you again, “How will history remember you?” Because the internet creates your history with everything you post!

About Randall Whitney:
Graduated with Honors in 2013 from KVCC in Kalamazoo, MI with an Associate’s Degree of Science in Business Administration. In effort to pursue his education, Randall will be attending Spring Arbor University to work towards a Baccalaureate Degree in Organizational Management.

Randall participated with the TRiO Future Educator Success Program at WMU while completing his internship to gain a broader perspective on teachers and their essential and vital roles in the academic environment.

In the near future, Randall aspires to become a small business owner operating his business in professional development and organization of other small businesses as well as professional coaching of individuals.

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Teachers & Social Media

The ABC’s and 123’s of getting an “A” on your social media web page.
Do Your Homework!
As we all know, being educated is the best line of defense against making mistakes. Therefore, the best way to avoid mistakes is to always do your homework and study as much as possible. And you thought you were done doing homework…right?

Doing your homework for this particular subject involves a lot of research. Before engaging in social media activities with your students, you should first check with various resources regarding the policy. Those resources include: the school, the school board, the Department of Education, and the city or county administration office for schools (depending if you are teaching in a public, private, charter, or magnet school).

With the number of issues concerning social media misconduct involving teachers and students, most schools already have either rules and regulations, a policy, guidelines, or a code of conduct in place. However, in the event there is not a policy currently adopted, do not panic! There are some simple and easy to follow guidelines.

How to Get an “A”!
- Stay professional on ALL social media sites!
- Don’t post while upset, angry, or intoxicated!
- Don’t post inappropriate photos or content!
- Don’t “friend” or accept friend requests from students!
- Keep it family friendly!
- Be vigilant to protect your name and image!

What’s Worse than Detention…?
How about getting suspended (or worse) when you are the teacher! If you thought it was serious when you were a kid, wait until you hear about how it is when you are the teacher.

Unfortunately, many school officials including teachers, school board members, and principals have found themselves in the hot-seat after behaving inappropriately on a social media site. For example, a school principal from New York had a photo of herself dancing while a man poured something over her circulated on Facebook...among students. In another example, a teacher felt pressure to resign after posting her views on homosexuality. And lastly, a Hamilton School Board Member came under fire for posting photos of naked women on his personal MySpace page – poor judgment can happen to anyone!

These people, plus many more, did not understand there is a fine (yet blurry), line between personal vs. public and freedom of speech vs. bullying – it is very easy to cross it unless you pay attention!

IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU!
Let’s do some math…Responsibility + Representation + Role Model + Reputation = You + Your Family + Your Friends + Your Students + Their Parents + Your Co-Workers + Your School + Your Community!!! Doesn’t make sense? Well then let’s work it out!

Responsibility:
As a teacher you are considered a public figure. You now have a responsibility, not only to yourself, but to many children, their parents, your co-workers, your school, your community, your friends, and your family to best represent them, be a role model to them, and build a solid reputation as being the absolute greatest you can be. Your name is associated with everyone you are connected to. Your mistake becomes their embarrassment.

Representation:
Inclusive of responsibility is the fact that you also represent everyone mentioned above. How you present yourself is a direct reflection of others who are in your life regardless of their position or their capacity. A couple simple things to keep in mind with this are (1) you never know who’s watching, and (2) actions speak louder than words. There are always two sides to every story but most of the time, you never get to tell your side!

*See more on the other side >>>